



NORTHSIDE

Primary School



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Dear Parents and Carers,

As a school community, we work together to give our children the best possible start in life. One area where we can make a significant and immediate difference is in reducing the amount of screen time our children are exposed to each day. Screens are now part of everyday life and when used well, they can support creativity and learning. However, growing research shows that excessive or unsupervised screen use (especially in the early years) can have a negative impact on children's development, learning, behaviour and wellbeing. We want to share some important information with you and invite all families to join us in a **School Screen-Time Reduction Pledge**.

Research shows:

- Over 2 hours of daily screen time is linked to delayed milestones, weaker vocabulary and attention problems.
- Fast-paced shows can reduce executive function (focus and impulse control).
- Excessive screen use before age 3 is linked to attention difficulties by age 7.
- High screen use is associated with poorer academic performance.
- Children learn language more slowly from videos/tv screens than from real-life interaction.

Ofcom's 2025 reports, including the Online Nation Report and Children & Parents: Media Use & Attitudes, show UK children aged 8-17 spend nearly 3 hours daily online, mostly on smartphones for YouTube, TikTok and Snapchat, with significant night-time use. Key trends also highlight increased young screen ownership of age 3-5 year olds. Excessive screen time has been linked to increasing obesity risk, disrupting sleep, impairing social/language skills, causing attention and behavior problems, impacting mental health (anxiety, depression), affecting cognitive development and reducing time for crucial physical and creative play.

Our School Screen-Time Pledge

We invite all families to join us in pledging to:

1. **Setting Clear Limits:** Establish age-appropriate daily screen time limits and follow them consistently, especially on school nights; limiting recreational screen time.
2. **Creating Screen-Free Times and Zones:** Avoid screens during mealtimes. Keep screens out of bedrooms, especially at night.



**WE HAVE
ACHIEVED**



3. **Supporting Healthy Sleep:** Avoid screen use at least one hour before bedtime and keep devices out of bedrooms overnight.
4. **Prioritising Learning and Wellbeing:** Prioritise talking, reading, outdoor play and creative activities.
5. **Monitoring Content and Use:** Be aware of the apps, games, and websites your child uses, ensuring they are age-appropriate and safe. Monitor the content.
6. **Modelling Positive Behaviour:** Demonstrate balanced screen use through your own habits and digital behaviour.
7. **Encouraging Open Communication:** Talk regularly with your child about online safety, kindness and what to do if something online makes them uncomfortable.
8. **Working in Partnership with the School:** Support the school's digital learning policies and communicate with staff if concerns about screen use arise.

Please electronically sign the attached pledge. Small changes can make a big difference to children's focus, learning and wellbeing.

Thank you for your support.

Mrs Longworth and Mrs Mulvihill-Ellis
Executive Headteacher and Head of School



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